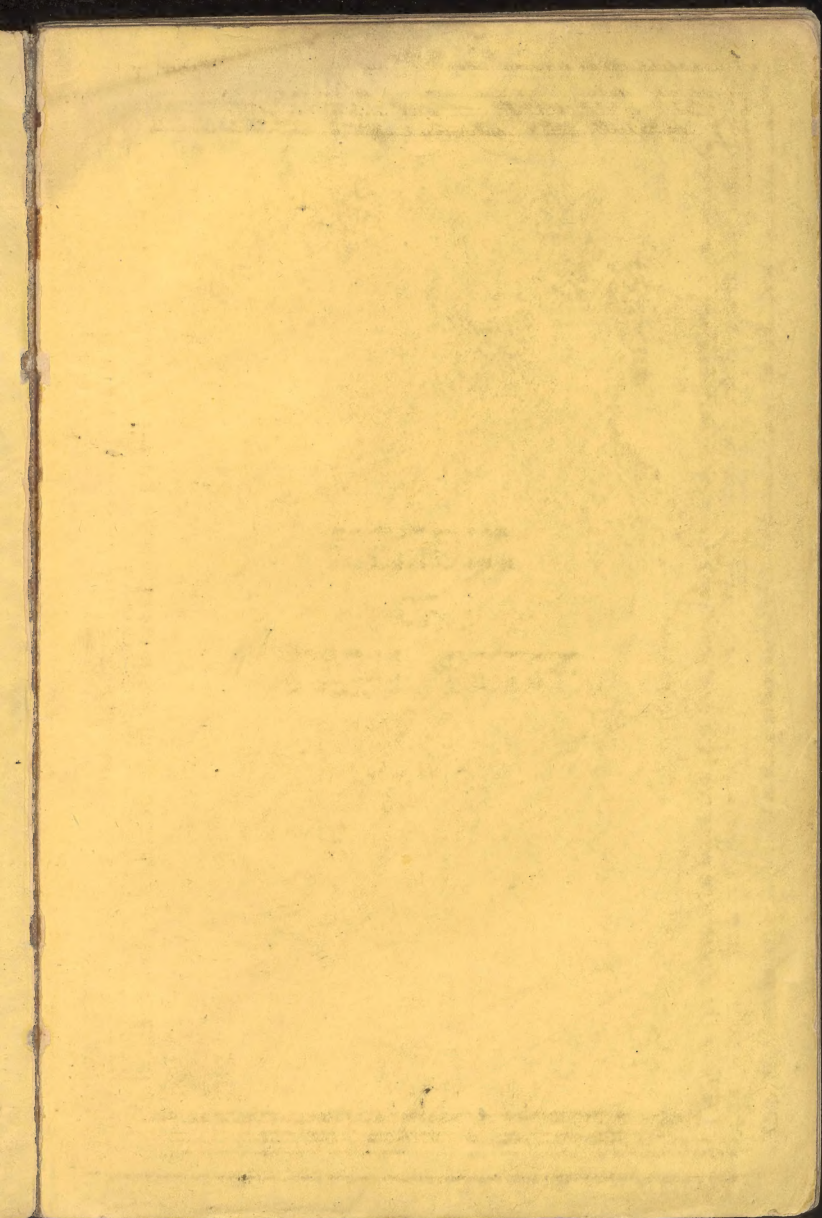


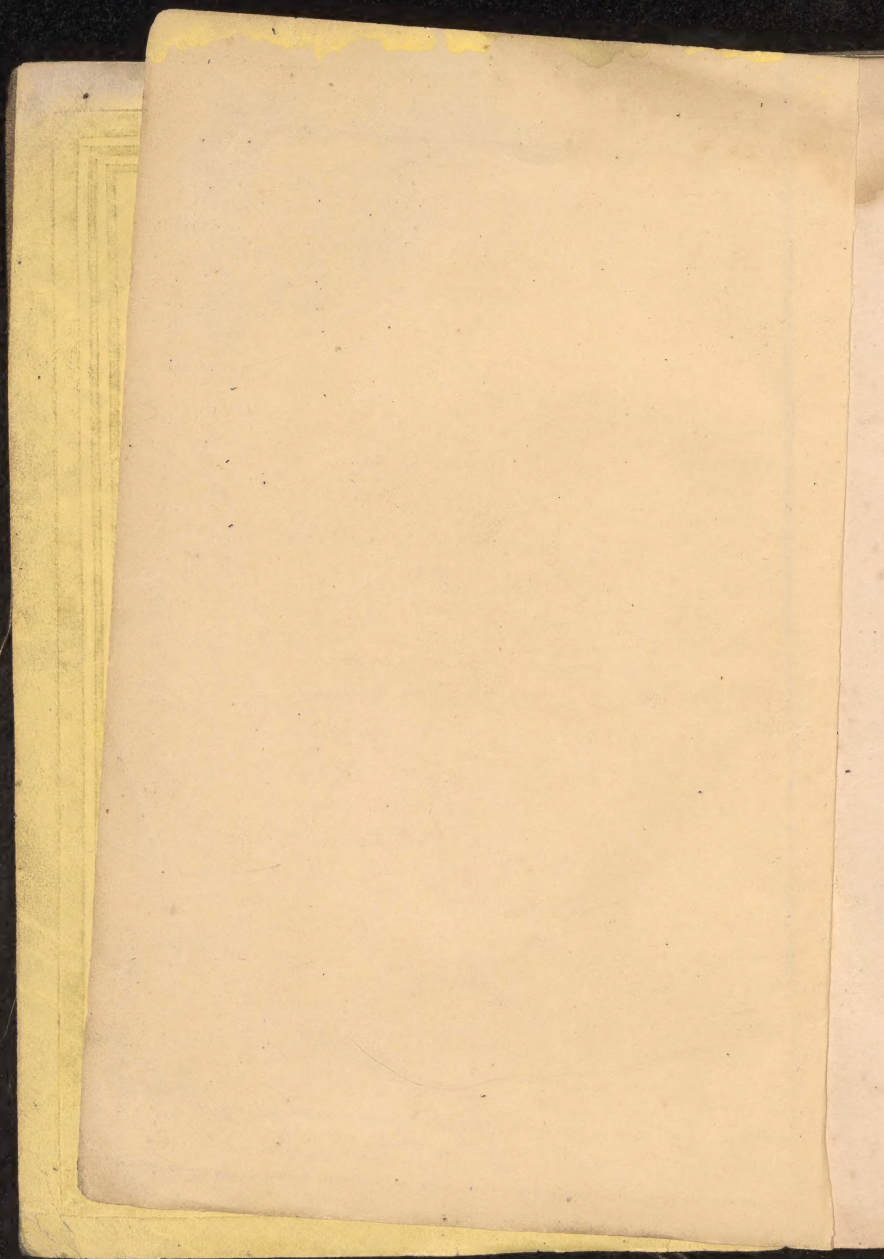
MEMOIR  
OF  
PAUL GUFFE

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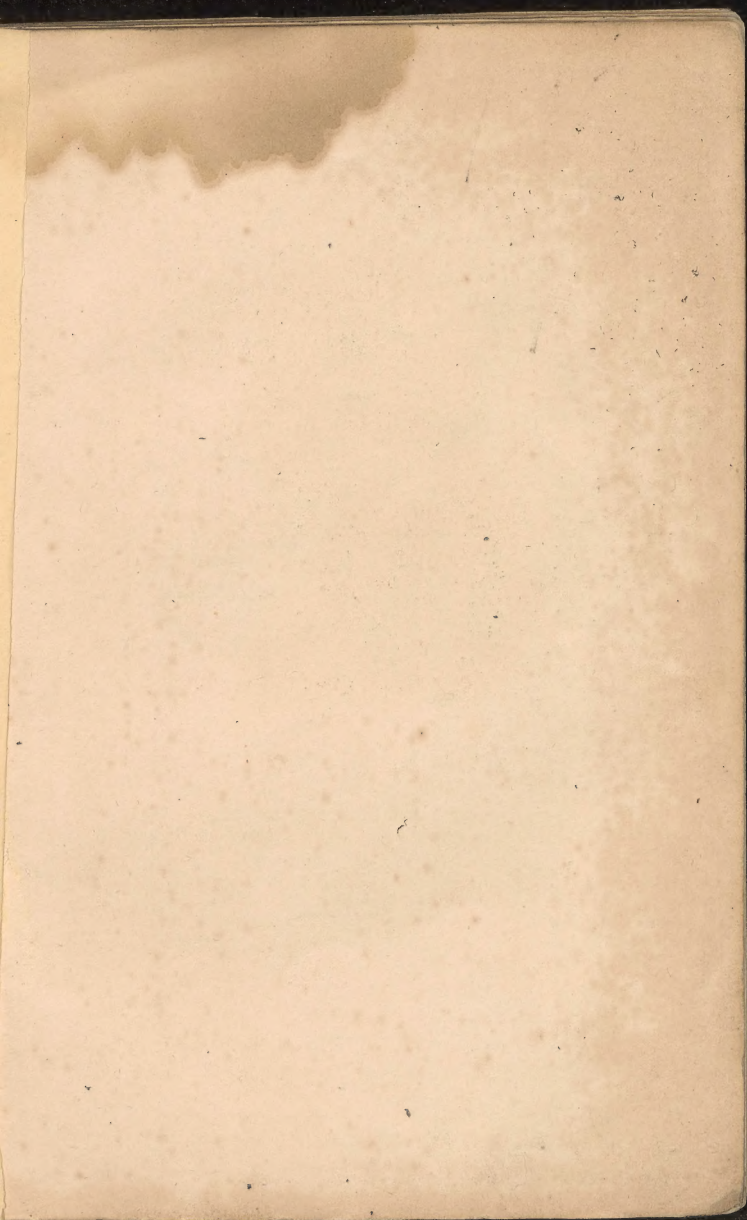
MEMOIR  
OF  
PAUL CUFFE













*Paul Cuffe.*

OB: 9 MO: 7. 1817.

The exertions of this truly benevolent individual,  
entitle him to the esteem of the world, and the  
grateful remembrance of latest posterity.



MEMOIR  
OF  
PAUL CUFFE,  
A MAN OF COLOUR.

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COMPILED FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES,  
BY  
WILSON ARMISTEAD.

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"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."—ACTS x. 34.

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LONDON:  
EDMUND FRY, BISHOPSGATE STREET.

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## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

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IN presenting the following Memoir to the public, the compiler begs leave to state, that the information contained in it has been collected from the most authentic sources, and he trusts is arranged in such a form, as to afford, on perusal, at the same time pleasure and instruction. Copious extracts, with a few verbal alterations, have been made from a printed Memoir published in 1812, which first appeared in the Liverpool Mercury; and also from a talented discourse delivered on the death of Paul Cuffe, before the New York African Institution, by Peter Williams, jun., also a man of colour.

Whilst in the present enlightened age, the grievous sin of man making merchandize of his fellow-creatures, and holding them in slavery, is almost universally acknowledged, it has appeared to the compiler, that a strong delusion, nevertheless, exists in the minds of many sincere Christians, respecting the intellectual capacity of our coloured fellow-men, and as regards their station in the scale of intelligent existence. When a prejudice towards any particular

party or individual is once entertained, it is difficult to erase it. Nothing, however, can be more absurd, than to suppose that inferior intellect is inseparable from a coloured skin. Yet I am fully persuaded there are too many amongst professing Christians, who, though they utterly discountenance slavery as unlawful in every sense of the word, and abhor the very name of it, look down upon all persons of colour as belonging to an inferior race of beings to themselves.

Under similar apprehensions to these, and desirous of seeing the negro restored to his violated privileges, and his proper rank in the scale of creation, the compiler has been induced to throw the following interesting and highly instructive Memoir before his Christian friends and the public; and should its perusal be the means of convincing any one that our coloured fellow-creatures are not inferior, in intellectual capacity to other branches of the human family, or that "superior abilities do not attach more to a white than to a coloured skin," the end in view will be fully answered.

"Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
Till some reason ye shall find;  
Worthier of regard, and stronger  
Than the colour of our kind."

COWPER.

But even for one moment, *admitting* this inferiority, instead of justifying us in inflicting on them

the miseries of slavery, it would give them an additional claim on our sympathy and Christian compassion; unless, indeed, we could prove, as some have attempted, that they are brute animals sent for the use of man. Supposing that "the retreating forehead and depressed vertex," do indicate an inferiority in the mental capacity of the negro, Does it prove that he is not a human being—that he has not an immortal soul; and that he is not an accountable creature? Does it prove that he is not capable of every rational act, and every social feeling, which is essential to a man? Does it prove that the negro race are less the children of "our Father who is in heaven," or authorize us to refuse a practical recognition of their being a part of the human family?

Many travellers, however, and those who have had frequent intercourse with coloured persons have borne testimony to their being possessed of intellectual capacities of no inferior order, facts bearing them out in their assertions, and proving at the same time, how susceptible they are of every generous and noble feeling of the mind, abounding in benevolence, hospitality, and filial affection, and capable of the highest attainments of the human understanding.

Adamson, who visited Senegal, in 1754, when describing the country, says: "It recalled to me the idea of the primitive race of men. I thought I saw the world in its infancy. The negroes are sociable,



humane, obliging, and hospitable; and they have generally preserved an estimable simplicity of domestic manners. They are distinguished by their tenderness for their parents, and great respect for the aged; a patriarchal virtue, which in our day is too little known."

Wadstrom in his admirable "Essay on Colonization," makes the following remarks, in speaking of the African race: "Their understandings have not been nearly so much cultivated as those of Europeans; but their passions, both defensive and social, are much stronger. Their hospitality to unprotected strangers, is liberal, disinterested, and free from ostentation. Their kindness and respectful attention to white persons, with whose characters they are satisfied, arises to a degree of partiality, which, all things considered, is perfectly surprising. On those parts of the coast and country where the slave-trade prevails, the inhabitants are shy and reserved, (as well they may,) and on all occasions go armed, lest they should be way-laid and carried off. In maternal, filial, and fraternal affection, I scruple not to pronounce them superior to any Europeans I ever was among. So very successful have the European slave-dealers been, in exciting in them a thirst for spirits, that it is now become one of the principal pillars of their trade; for the chiefs intoxicated by the liquor with which they are purposely bribed by the whites, often make bargains,

and give orders fatal to their subjects, which, when sober, they would gladly retract.

“On a question put to me in a committee of the British House of Commons, I offered to produce specimens of their manufactures in iron, gold, filigree-work, leather, cotton, matting, and basket-work; some of which equal any articles of the kind fabricated in Europe, and evince that, with proper encouragement they would make excellent workmen. Even the least improved tribes make their own fishing tackle, canoes, and implements of agriculture. If even, while the slave-trade disturbs their peace, and endangers their persons, they have made such a progress, what may we not expect if that grievous obstacle were removed, and their ingenuity directed into a proper channel? The slave-trade disturbs their agriculture still more than their manufactures; for men will not be fond of planting, who have not a moral certainty of reaping. Yet, even without enjoying that certainty, they raise grain, fruits, and roots, not only sufficient for their own consumption, but even to supply the demands of the European shipping, often to a considerable extent; in some islands and parts of the coast, where there is no slave-trade, they have made great progress in agriculture. Though, in the whole, passion is more predominant in the African character than reason; yet their intellects are so far from being of an inferior order,

that one finds it difficult to account for their acuteness, which so far transcends their apparent means of improvement.

“The Blacks living in London are generally profligate, because uninstructed, and vitiated by slavery; for many of them were once slaves of the most worthless descriptions; namely, the idle and superfluous domestic, and the gamblers and thieves who infest the towns in the West Indies. Some come to attend children and sick persons on board, and others are brought by their masters in way of parade. In London, being friendless and despised on account of their complexion, and too many of them being really incapable of any useful occupation, they sink into abject poverty.”

Should this little Memoir, perchance, fall into the hands of any of those persons of colour who enjoy the inestimable privilege of freedom, either by birthright or emancipation, let me earnestly encourage them to cultivate habits of industry and sobriety, bearing in mind, that by their good conduct they not only promote their own happiness, but that they advocate the cause of universal emancipation, by showing to the world their capability of enjoying the benefit of society, and providing comfortably for themselves and their families.

Major Laing, in his “Travels in Western Africa,” observes; “a destitute old man is unknown among



the Mandingoes. A son considers it his first duty to look after and provide for his aged father's comfort; and if he is unfortunate enough to have lost his own, he perhaps looks for some aged sire, who, being without children, requires the care and attention of youth. There is no nation with which I am acquainted, where age is treated with so much respect and deference."

Anthony Benezet, a highly philanthropic and benevolent individual, and a member of the Society of Friends, established a school in Philadelphia for the instruction of the negroes, in which he himself taught gratuitously. No one had a better opportunity of ascertaining their capabilities than he had: and he says, "I can with truth and sincerity declare that I have found amongst the negroes, as great variety of talents, as among a like number of whites; and I am bold to assert, that the notion entertained by some, that the blacks are inferior in their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice founded on the pride or ignorance of their lordly masters, who have kept their slaves at such a distance, as to be unable to form a right judgment of them."

These are only a few testimonials to the real character of the negro race, but they are amply sufficient to enable us first, to refute those calumnies which describe the negro as insensible to the value of the blessings of freedom, and as so incapable of appreciat-

ing these blessings, as to be fit, and even designed, for no other than a servile and ignominious rank in the human family. They are also enough to convince us, secondly, that negroes are able to manage their own concerns, that they need no impulse from the whip, but when in a state of freedom have no disinclination to work, and that willingly, from the natural impulse only of their own reflections. Were it necessary many testimonials of a similar import might be here introduced, but when erroneous notions are once entertained, it is a difficult task to eradicate them from the mind, however unfounded they may be. When young persons are trained up in the midst of cruelty and slavery, and inured from their very infancy to see the sufferings of the poor victims of oppression, to listen to their cries, and behold them treated with impunity, as creatures possessed of mere animal propensities, the vilest of the vile, is it any marvel that they should imbibe those feelings of prejudice which are thus early instilled into their minds? Certainly not. Being taught to look down upon their unfortunate fellows, as a race of beings inferior in all respects to themselves, and not entitled to the enjoyment of the same rights and privileges, their hearts become hardened, and their feelings blunted and deadened: and thus they grow up almost unconscious of the responsibility of their station, and insensible of the enor-

mity of the evils they are committing. For these, as well as for their victims, our tenderest sympathy ought to be awakened, and our aspirations to ascend before Him who can unstop the deaf ear, and open the eyes even of those "who are blind," and show them the awful situation in which they stand.

The present apparent inferiority of the negro slaves, is sufficiently accounted for by the degraded state in which they are kept by their oppressors. It is only when they are in possession of privileges and advantages equivalent to the rest of mankind, that we can draw a fair comparison between them and the whites. What can we expect from them, when they are attended with everything that is unfavourable to their improvement, and are deprived of every means of bettering their condition, or cultivating their minds? "Destitute of all instruction, worked like brutes, and punished more severely; crushed by the iron hand of oppression into the very dust; having everything to fear, and nothing to hope for; without any impelling motive but that of terror; with scarcely any possibility of enjoyment but what arises from his mere animal nature, what virtue can we look for in the poor slave? If his appetites and passions are checked, it is not by the operation of principle, but by the dread of corporeal punishment. Can anything manly or generous be expected from those who are debased to the condition of brutes,



who are kept in a state of perpetual and abject servility? Can we suppose that a very nice sense of justice will be entertained by those who are constantly treated with injustice; who know it, and feel it; who see the white man sin with impunity, and the black man often suffering without crime? Can we be so unreasonable as to look for undeviating honesty and integrity in those who are conscious that they are the subjects of continued wrong, inflicted by those whom they regard as so much their superiors in knowledge? Are they not constantly taught by the conduct of white men, that power is right; and that therefore, whatever they are able to do with impunity they have a right to do? Must they not feel that fraud and cunning are the only weapons with which they can engage the white man, and obtain any advantage? Shall we then wonder, as we are told by all who know the negro character, that in the midst of all their ignorance, there is a shrewdness which seems natural to them; that the system of oppression under which they live, cherishes the habits of falsehood and petty theft? Can purity and chastity exist in such circumstances as theirs, where there is no protection of the marriage union; where all are allowed to herd together as the beasts of the fields, and have, in the conduct of the white man, so bad an example before their eyes? What means are used to enlighten their

minds or form their morals? Can any plant of virtue vegetate without the light of knowledge and the culture of instruction? What are they suffered to know of Christianity, but its outward forms; and what impressions must they receive of it from their Christian masters? Can they see anything in it which is attractive? What motives have they to embrace it? Ignorant alike of the doctrines and the duties, the divine consolation and the holy precepts of Christianity, they remain pagans in a Christian land, without even an object of idolatrous worship; 'having no hope, and without God in the world.' Let not, then, the abettors of slavery, who trample their fellow-creatures beneath their feet, tell us, in their own justification, of the degraded state, the abject minds, and the vices of the slaves; it is upon the system which thus brutifies a human being, that the reproach falls in all its bitterness."

"Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resigned,  
 He feels his body's bondage in his mind,  
 Puts off his gen'rous nature, and to suit  
 His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.  
 Oh! most degrading of all ills that wait  
 On man, a mourner in his best estate!  
 All other sorrow virtue may endure,  
 And find submission more than half a cure.  
 But slavery! virtue dreads it as her grave,  
 Patience itself is meanness in a slave;

Or, if the will and sovereignty of God,  
 Bids suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,  
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,  
 And snap the chain the moment when you may."

COWPER.

It is absurd to tell us of their vast inferiority, whilst they are ground down and kept in a state of degradation, which renders mental and moral improvement almost an impossibility. It not only stints the growth of everything that is generous and manly, but it tends to destroy every spring of virtuous action, and to bring a human being as nearly as possible to the condition of a brute. The same effects would be equally visible in those of any nation or complexion, were they subjected to a treatment as cruel as that which the Africans have long endured. M. Dupius, the British Consul at Mogadore, observes, that "even the generality of European Christians, after a long captivity and severe treatment among the Arabs, appeared at first exceedingly stupid and insensible. If they have been any considerable time in slavery, they appear lost to reason and feeling; their spirits broken; and their faculties sunk in a species of stupor which I am unable adequately to describe. They appear degraded even below the negro slave. The succession of hardships, without any protecting law to which they can appeal for any alleviation or redress, seems to destroy every spring of exertion or



hope in their minds. They appear indifferent to everything around them ; abject, servile, and brutish.”\* There is ample proof then, that bondage and severity has a necessary tendency to degrade the mind, and debase and brutalize the feelings of all mankind. Oh, yes ! let the shackles be loosed from the negro ; let him feel the invigorating influence of freedom ; let hope enter his bosom ; and let him be cheered and animated with the prospect of reward for his exertions, and the foul calumny of his great and inevitable inferiority will soon be refuted in himself !

As many into whose hands this Memoir may fall, may have seen the account published in 1812, and the “ Discourse,” which subsequently appeared in print, a little discrepancy will be observed in the orthography of the name Cuffe. In these pamphlets, and also in a short notice of him in the obituary of an American paper, it is spelt Cuffee, which mode is evidently an erroneous one ; but how the mistake could in the first instance originate, it is impossible now to ascertain. I have concluded it best not to copy the error which has crept (most probably inadvertently) into these documents, but to make use of that mode of spelling which he himself invariably adopts in the letters I have seen, a fac

\* Wilberforce’s “ appeal in behalf of the negro slaves of the West Indies.”

simile of which is subjoined to the accompanying profile.

In conclusion, I have to return my thanks to several kind friends for the interesting information they have furnished me with; and I only wish I could have obtained more, and that some one possessed of better qualifications, and who could have devoted more time to the subject than myself, had undertaken the compilation. I shall however, trust to the liberality of the reader in overlooking any slight errors into which I may have inadvertently fallen, desiring also that what is now offered, may not by any means be looked upon as a finished picture, "but as the rude outlines of the character of a man who was truly great," and philanthropic; and whose endeavours to promote the happiness of his fellow-men, and to relieve their sufferings, confer more honour upon him, than ever marble statue or monumental trophy could do.

W. A.

12, *Liverpool Street*,  
*London*, 8th of 6th Mo. 1840.

## MEMOIR OF PAUL CUFFE.

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BEFORE proceeding to the subject of the present Memoir, the brief mention of a few particulars which are recorded respecting his parents may be interesting. His father's name was Cuffe; he was a native of Africa, whence at an early age he was dragged by the unfeeling hand of avarice from his home and connexions; torn from the parental roof and everything in this world that was near and dear to him; transported over the wide and trackless ocean, many thousand miles from the land of his birth, to be for ever consigned to rigorous and cruel bondage:

“To increase a stranger's treasures  
O'er the raging billows borne.”

He was purchased as a slave by a person named Slocum, resident in Massachusetts, one of the United States of North America, by whom he was kept in slavery a considerable portion of his life; and there is no reason to doubt, had it not been for his laudable enterprise, aided by great perseverance, he would



have worn out his life in perpetual bondage, and ended his days, like many of his degraded and unjustly oppressed fellow-countrymen under the galling yoke of fetters and chains, or the smart inflicted by the whip of the unrelenting driver. Being possessed, however, of a mind far superior to his degraded and unhappy condition, he was always diligent in his master's business, and proved himself in numerous instances faithful to his interests; so that by unremitting industry and economy, he was enabled, after a considerable length of time, under the blessing of a kind Providence, to procure the means for purchasing his personal liberty, of which he had been deprived, as already stated in very early life.

An inference must not be drawn from this circumstance, that all slaves have it in their power, or are placed in a capacity to purchase their freedom: the case is far otherwise. Slave-holders in many places are not allowed by law to liberate or discharge their slaves; and even where it is allowable, it remains entirely at the owner's option whether he choose to part with a slave for any price. So that emancipation is of very rare occurrence, and many insurmountable difficulties are thrown in the way of a slave desirous of effecting his freedom. "Some having had the opportunity to learn a trade, pay their owners a stipulated sum per week, or month, or otherwise, and have the surplus earnings for themselves; with which

it may happen, if they are industrious, and have their health, and are successful, they may, in course of time, lay up a sum to purchase their own freedom, or that of a wife or child. But the owner may choose what he pleases for his time: if he be covetous, may screw him to the last farthing; or, if he need money, may sell him to some distant part of the colony, to any proprietor, who, again, may do with him just as he pleases.”\*

According to the custom of the country into which he was transported, Cuffe also received the name of Slocum, as expressing to whom he belonged. Though it appears in after life he was known by the name of John Cuffe. Soon after the happy period in which Cuffe effected his emancipation, and succeeded in releasing himself from the bonds of slavery and unjust oppression, he became acquainted with Ruth Moses, an honourable woman descended from one of the Indian tribes residing in Massachusetts. These Indians were the original inheritors and sole possessors of the soil, until they were with most of the neighbouring tribes unfairly and cruelly deprived of their rightful property by the incursions of foreign invaders, who, though they assumed to themselves the name of Christians, scrupled not to be the perpetrators of some of the most horrid actions which

\* Godwin's "Lecture on Slavery," p. 11.

deface the pages of history ; evincing plainly enough by their nefarious deeds, which gave the lie to their professions, that they were not the followers of the " Prince of Peace ;" that they sought their own glory and not the glory of God, nor the advancement of His kingdom upon earth.

" A rabid race, fanatically bold,  
And steel'd to cruelty by lust of gold,  
Traversed the waves, the unknown world explored,  
The cross their standard, but their faith the sword ;  
Their steps were graves ; o'er prostrate realms they trod ;  
They worshipp'd Mammon while they vow'd to God.

MONTGOMERY.

and under this false pretence of serving God, and a desire to promote the happiness of the natives hitherto unknown, and of planting His religion amongst them, they went about like " roaring lions seeking whom they might devour:" carrying forward their work of cruelty and destruction, until nearly the whole of the aboriginal tribes were so far reduced, as to be unable to offer any effectual resistance, and in too many instances, almost entirely extirpated. " *Auferre, trucidare, rapere falsis nominibus imperium, atque ubi solitudinem faciunt pacem appellant.\**"

This is not, however, the place to treat of these

\* Tacitus.



things, but the truth is too well established to be for one moment called in question.\* Though the wicked may be permitted to "flourish for a time like a green bay tree," yet "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth," and for all these things he will bring them into judgment.

Cuffe's acquaintance with Ruth Moses ended in their taking each other in marriage ; and continuing in his praiseworthy habits of industry and frugality, he was enabled soon after this occurrence to purchase a farm of 100 acres of land, in Westport, Massachusetts : Cuffe and Ruth continued to live happily together, and brought up a family of ten children, four sons, and six daughters. Three of the former, David, Jonathan, and John, were farmers in the neighbourhood of Westport, filled respectable stations in society, and were endowed with good intellectual capacities. They all married well and gave their children a good education. Four of the daughters were also married in 1811, the remaining two were then single, but whether they remained so, I have not been able to ascertain.

Cuffe died in 1745, leaving behind him a considerable property in land, the fruits of his industry ; and I have not been able to procure any further information respecting him, than what has already been related, except that a short time previous to his

\* Read Howitts "Colonization and Christianity."

decease, when his bodily sufferings were great, he made use of expressions somewhat as follows, as nearly as could be remembered by those who were in the room :—" Oh ! very weak ; my pain very great ; more than to endure it ; but oh ! the great and good Spirit send me much strong help, and run through me like refreshing stream ; praised be His name. Oh ! you that look on me see how Christian die ; see how he cheerfully go when he called. Oh ! He be like a kind father to all you, if you do what He tell you, and love you, and make you very happy now, very happy after. I go to Him very soon, and be more happy, so never you cry after me. Love God, He very kind and love you."

Paul, the youngest son of Cuffe, and the interesting subject of the present Memoir, was born on Cutterhunker, one of the Elizabeth Islands, near New Bedford, in the year 1759 ; so, that when his father died, he was about fourteen years of age, at which time he had learnt but little more than the letters of the alphabet. The land which his father had left behind him proving unproductive, afforded but little provision for the numerous family : so that the care of supporting his mother and sisters devolved jointly upon himself and his brothers. Thus he laboured under great disadvantages, being deprived of the means and opportunity for acquiring even the rudiments of a good education. He was not however

easily to be discouraged, and found opportunities of improving himself in various ways, and cultivating his mind. Having never received the benefits of an education, the knowledge he possessed was obtained entirely by his own indefatigable exertions, and the little assistance which he occasionally received from persons who were friendly disposed towards him. Aided by these means he soon learned to read and write, and he also attained to a considerable proficiency in arithmetic, and skill in navigation ; and we may form some estimate of the natural talent with which he was endowed for the speedy reception of learning, from the fact, that with the assistance of a friend, he acquired such a knowledge of the latter science in the short space of two weeks, as enabled him to command the vessel, in the voyages which he subsequently made to this country, to Russia, to Africa, and to the West Indies, as well as to several different ports in the southern section of the United States.

It has already been stated that his three brothers were respectable farmers in the neighbourhood of Westport. The mind of Paul, however, was early inclined to the pursuits of commerce, conceiving that they furnished to industry more ample rewards than agriculture, and conscious that he possessed qualities which, under proper culture, would enable him to pursue commercial employments with prospects of



success, he entered at the age of sixteen, as a common hand on board of a vessel destined to the Bay of Mexico, on a whaling expedition. His second voyage was to the West Indies; but on his third, which was during the American war, about the year 1776, he was captured by a British ship. After three months detention as a prisoner at New York, he was permitted to return home to Westport, where owing to the unfortunate continuance of hostilities, he spent about two years in agricultural pursuits. During this interval, Paul and his brother, John Cuffe, were called on by the collector of the district in which they resided, for the payment of a personal tax. It appeared to them, that by the laws of the constitution of Massachusetts, taxation and the whole rights of citizenship were united. If the laws demanded of them the payment of personal taxes, the same laws must necessarily and constitutionally invest them with the rights of representing, and being represented, in the State legislature. But they had never been considered as entitled to the privilege of voting at elections, or of being elected to places of trust and honour. Under these circumstances, they refused to comply. The collector resorted to the force of the laws; and after many delays and vexations, Paul and his brother deemed it most prudent to silence the suit, by payment of the demands which were only small; but they resolved, if it

were possible to obtain the rights which they believed to be connected with taxation. In pursuance of this resolution, they presented a respectful petition to the State legislature, which met with a warm and almost indignant opposition from some in authority. A considerable majority, however, perceived the propriety and justice of the petition, were favourable to the object, and with an honourable magnanimity, in defiance of the prejudice of the times, a law was enacted by them rendering all free persons of colour, liable to taxation, according to the ratio established for white men, and granting them all the privileges belonging to other citizens. This was a day equally honourable to the petitioners and to the legislature; a day in which justice and humanity triumphed over prejudice and oppression; and a day which ought to be gratefully remembered by every person of colour within the boundaries of Massachusetts, and the names of John and Paul Cuffe, should always be united with its recollection.

Paul being at this time about twenty years of age, thought himself sufficiently skilled to enter into business on his own account, and laid before his brother David, a plan for opening a commercial intercourse with the State of Connecticut. His brother was pleased with the prospect, and they built an open boat and proceeded to sea. Here, for the first time, David found himself exposed to the perils of

the ocean, and the hazard of a predatory warfare, which was carried on by the refugees. They had not traversed many leagues before David's fears began to multiply, and his mind to magnify its dangers; his courage sunk, and he resolved to return. This disappointment was a severe trial to a young man of Paul's adventurous and intrepid spirit, but he was affectionate, and many years younger than his brother, and therefore submitted to his determination. Paul returned to his farm and laboured diligently in his fields; but his mind was frequently revolving new schemes of commercial enterprize. Having collected the necessary materials for another effort, he again made the attempt, went to sea, and lost all the little treasure, which, by the sweat of his brow, he had gathered. Paul, however, seems to have possessed that active courage, which is the offspring of a mind satisfied of the practicability of its plans, and conscious of its power to accomplish its purpose. He therefore resolutely determined to persevere in the road which he had marked out for himself. The necessity of aiding his mother and family, was a constant and strong incitement to renew his efforts. His funds were not sufficient to purchase a vessel; but in order to obviate this difficulty, he set himself earnestly to work, and with his own hands formed and completed a boat, from keel to gunwale. This vessel was without a deck, but he had been on a whaling



voyage, and was, therefore, perfectly skilled in its management. He launched his boat into the ocean, and as he was steering for one of the Elizabeth islands to consult with his brother on his future plans, he was discovered by the Refugee pirates, who chased and seized both him and his vessel. Robbed of everything, he returned home penniless, but without sinking under this discouragement. Thus circumstanced, he applied to his brother David, who, though in some degree deterred by the want of success which had hitherto attended Paul's attempts, yet acquiesced in his proposal to build another boat, by furnishing Paul with the materials. This being accomplished, the respectability of Paul Cuffe's character procured him sufficient credit to enable him to purchase a cargo, and proceeding towards Nantucket, he was again chased on the voyage by the Refugee pirates, but escaped them by night coming on; he, however, struck upon a rock on one of the Elizabeth islands, and so far injured his boat as to render it necessary for him to return to Westport to refit; which being accomplished, he again set out for Nantucket, where he arrived in safety, but did not dispose of his cargo to advantage. He afterwards undertook a similar voyage, with better success; but as he was returning home, he again fell into the hands of the pirates, and was deprived of his all except the vessel, which they permitted him to take;

not, however, without his having received much personal injury and ill-treatment from them.

Under such numerous and untoward discomfitures, the courage of most persons would have failed, but Paul's dispositions were not of that yielding nature. He possessed that inflexible spirit of perseverance and firmness of mind, which entitled him to a more successful issue of his endeavours; and he believed, that while he maintained integrity of heart and conduct, he might humbly hope for the protection of Providence. Under these impressions he prepared for another voyage. In his open boat, with a small cargo, he again directed his course towards the island of Nantucket. The weather was favourable, and he arrived in safety at the destined port, and disposed of his little cargo to advantage. The profits of this voyage, by strengthening the confidence of his friends, enabled him further to enlarge his plans, and by a steady perseverance, he was at length enabled, under Divine assistance, to overcome obstacles apparently insurmountable.

Having become master of a small covered vessel of about twelve tons burden, he hired a person to assist him as a seaman, and made many advantageous voyages to different parts of the State of Connecticut; and when about twenty-five years of age, he married a native of the country, and a descendant of the same tribe to which his mother

belonged. For some time after his marriage, he attended chiefly to his agricultural concerns; but from an increase of family, he at length deemed it necessary to pursue his commercial undertakings more extensively than he had before done. He arranged his affairs for a new expedition, and hired a small house on Westport river, to which he removed his family. A vessel of eighteen tons was now procured, in which he sailed to the banks of St. George, in quest of cod-fish, and returned home with a valuable cargo. This important adventure was the foundation of an extensive and profitable fishing establishment from Westport river, which continued for a considerable time, and was the source of an honest and comfortable living to many of the inhabitants of that district.

At this period Paul formed a connexion with his brother-in-law, Michael Wainer, who had several sons well qualified for the sea service, four of whom subsequently, laudably filled responsible situations as captains and first mates. A vessel of twenty-five tons was built, and in two voyages to the straits of Bellisle and Newfoundland, he met with such success, as enabled him, in conjunction with another person, to build a vessel of forty-two tons burthen, in which he made several profitable voyages.

Paul had experienced the many disadvantages of his very limited education, and he resolved, as far as



it was practicable, to relieve his children from similar embarrassments. The neighbourhood had neither a tutor nor a school for the instruction of youth, though many of the citizens were desirous that such an institution should be established. About 1797, Paul proposed convening a meeting of the inhabitants, for the purpose of making such arrangements as should accomplish the desired object, the great utility and necessity of which, was undeniable. The collision of opinion, however, respecting mode and place, occasioned the meeting to separate without arriving at any conclusion: several meetings of the same nature were held, but all were alike, unsuccessful in their issue. Perceiving that all efforts to procure a union of sentiment were fruitless, Paul, by no means disheartened, set himself to work in earnest, and had a suitable house built on his own ground, and entirely at his own expense, which he freely offered for the use of the public, without requiring any pecuniary remuneration, feeling himself fully compensated in the satisfaction he derived in seeing it occupied for so useful and excellent a purpose; and the school was opened to all who pleased to send their children. How gratifying to humanity is this anecdote! and who, that justly appreciates human character, would not prefer Paul Cuffe, the offspring of an African slave, to the proudest statesman that ever dealt out destruction amongst mankind?

About this time, Paul proceeded on a whaling voyage to the Straits of Bellisle, where he met with four other vessels completely equipped with boats and harpoons, for capturing whales. Paul discovered that he had not made proper preparations for the business, having only ten hands on board, and two boats, one of which, was old and almost useless. When the masters of the other vessels discovered his situation, they refused to comply with the customary practices adopted on such voyages, and refused to mate with his crew. In this emergency, Paul resolved to prosecute his undertaking alone, till at length the other masters thought it most prudent to accede to the usual practice, apprehending his crew, by their ignorance, might alarm and drive the whales from their reach, and thus defeat the object of their voyage. During the season, they took seven whales. The circumstances which had taken place, roused the ambition of Paul and his crew; they were diligent and enterprising, and had the honour of killing six of seven whales; two of which fell by Paul's own hands. He returned home in due season, heavily freighted with oil and bone, and arrived in the autumn of 1793, being then about his thirty-fourth year. He went to Philadelphia to dispose of his cargo, and found his pecuniary circumstances were by this time in a flourishing train. When in Philadelphia, he purchased iron necessary for bolts, and other work

suitable for a schooner of sixty or seventy tons, and soon after his return to Westport, the keel for a new vessel was laid. In 1795, his schooner of sixty-nine tons burthen was launched, and called "The Ranger." He also possessed two small fishing boats, but his money was exhausted, and the cargo of his new vessel would require a considerable sum beyond his present stock. He now sold his two boats, and was enabled to place on board his schooner a cargo valued at 2000 dollars; with this he sailed to Norfolk, on the Chesapeak Bay, and there learned that a very plentiful crop of Indian corn had been gathered that year on the eastern shore of Maryland, and that he could procure a schooner-load for a low price, at Vienna, on the Nantcoke river. Thither he sailed, but on his arrival, the people were filled with astonishment and alarm :—a vessel owned and commanded by a black man, and manned with a crew of the same complexion, was unprecedented and surprising.

The white inhabitants were struck with apprehensions of the injurious effects, which such circumstances would have on the minds of their slaves, suspecting that he wished secretly to kindle the spirit of rebellion, and excite a destructive revolt among them. Under these notions, several persons associated themselves for the purpose of preventing Paul from entering his vessel or remaining among them. On



examination, his papers proved to be correct, and the custom-house officers could not legally refuse the entry of his vessel. Paul combined prudence with resolution ; and on this occasion conducted himself with candour, modesty, and firmness ; and his crew behaved, not only inoffensively, but with a conciliating propriety. In a few days the inimical association vanished, and the inhabitants treated him and his crew with respect and even kindness. Many of the principal people visited his vessel, and in consequence of the pressing invitation of one of them, Paul dined with his family in the town.

In three weeks Paul sold his cargo, and received into his schooner 3000 bushels of Indian corn. With this he returned to Westport, where that article was in great demand ; his cargo sold rapidly, and yielded him a profit of 1000 dollars. He re-loaded his vessel, sailed for Norfolk, sold his cargo, and took in another, which, on his return, proved as profitable as his first voyage. The home-market was now amply supplied with corn, and it became necessary to seek a different employment for his vessel. He accordingly sailed to Passamaquoddy in search of a cargo. When he arrived at the river, James Brian, a merchant of Wilmington, (Delaware State,) made him a liberal offer for his vessel to carry a load of gypsum. Paul thought the proposed price for the freight would equal the profits of any other business, and embraced his

terms, and taking on board the proposed cargo he proceeded to Wilmington. Since that period, some of the vessels in which he was concerned made annually one or two voyages to the same port.

During the year, 1797, after his return home, he purchased the house in which his family resided, and the adjoining farm. For the latter, including improvements, he paid 3500 dollars; and placed it under the management of his brother, who as before stated was a farmer.

By judicious plans, and diligence in their execution, Paul gradually increased his property, and by the integrity and consistency of his conduct, he gained the esteem and regard of his fellow-citizens. In the year 1800, he was concerned in one-half of the expenses of building and equipping a brig of 162 tons burthen. One-fourth belonged to his brother, and the other fourth was owned by persons not related to his family, and was commanded by Thomas Wainer, Paul Cuffe's nephew, whose talents and character were perfectly adequate to such situation.

The Ship "Alpha," of 268 tons, carpenter's measure, of which Paul owned three-fourths, was built in 1806. Of this vessel he was the commander; the rest of the crew consisting of seven men of colour. The ship performed a voyage under his command, from Wilmington to Savannah, thence to Gottenburgh, and thence to Philadelphia.

After Paul's return, in 1806, the brig "Traveller" of 109 tons burthen, was built at Westport; of one-half of which he was the owner. After this period, being extensively engaged in his mercantile and agricultural pursuits, he resided at Westport.

In his person, Paul Cuffe was tall, well formed, and athletic; his deportment conciliating, yet dignified and prepossessing; his countenance blending gravity with modesty and sweetness, and firmness with gentleness and humanity; in speech and habit plain and unostentatious. His whole exterior indicated a man of respectability and piety, and such would a stranger have supposed him to be at first view. His prudence, strengthened by parental care and example, was no doubt a safe-guard to him in his youth, when exposed to the dissolute company which unavoidably attends a seafaring life; whilst the religion of Jesus Christ influencing his mind under the secret guidance of the Holy Spirit of Truth, in silent reflection, added in advancing manhood to the brightness of his character, and instituted or confirmed his disposition to practical good.

He became fully convinced of the principles of truth as held by the Society of Friends, and uniting himself in membership with them, it pleased the great Head of the Church, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, who respecteth not the persons of men, in his own due time to



entrust him with a gift in the ministry, which he frequently exercised to the comfort and edification of his friends and brethren.

It not unfrequently happens that persons in indigent circumstances, even whilst neglecting the opportunities afforded them of doing good, are very liable to entertain so exalted an opinion of their own benevolence, as to suppose that were they but possessed of the means, they would abound in deeds of philanthropy and charity. But when in the vicissitudes of human affairs, the scale is turned in their favour, and their condition in life becomes improved, their philanthropic and charitable intentions generally decrease in the same ratio as their abilities to execute them increase. So that the man who at one time is loudest in his declamations against the rich, for their want of liberality and compassion to the poor and distressed, on a change of circumstances, is not unfrequently found as unfeeling and as illiberal towards those whom it has pleased Providence in his inscrutable wisdom, still to continue in the humble walks, from which he himself had been raised. This may be looked upon as a general rule; but as there never was a rule without exceptions, so to the rule just laid down, Paul Cuffe formed through life a noble exception. "He rose like the sun, diffusing wider and wider the rays of his beneficence; until having attained his zenith, even the nations beyond

the seas were made to rejoice in his beams. Inspired in early life with a desire of benefiting his fellow-men, the extent of his means might always be determined by the extent of his usefulness."

When the state of his affairs were such as to render it necessary that all his resources should be employed in the pursuit of his private interests, he was nevertheless, as far as was consistent with his primary object, always willing to advance the interests of his friends, and of the community at large, as opportunities offered.

For instance, when he was prevented from going abroad as usual in the pursuit of his business, on account of the rigours of the winter, he often devoted a considerable portion of his time in teaching navigation to his own sons, and to the young men in the neighbourhood in which he resided. And even on his voyages, when opportunities occurred, he employed himself in imparting a knowledge of this invaluable science to those under him, so that he had the honour of training up, both amongst the white and coloured population, a considerable number of skilful navigators.

He was careful to maintain a strict integrity and uprightness in all his transactions in trade, and believing himself to be accountable to God for the mode of using and acquiring his possessions, he was at all times willing, and conceived it to be his

bounden duty as a humble follower of a crucified Lord, to sacrifice his private interests rather than engage in any enterprise, however lawful in the eyes of the world, or however profitable, that might have a tendency in the smallest degree, either directly or indirectly, to injure his fellow-men. On these grounds, he would not deal in intoxicating liquors or in slaves, though he might have done either, without violating the laws of his country, and with great prospects of pecuniary gain. Seeing the great evils which frequently arise from the use of intoxicating liquors, it deserves the serious consideration of all Christians how far they can consistently be engaged in making, vending, or in any way encouraging the use of an article, not essentially necessary to persons in health; but proved under every variety of circumstances, even when taken in small quantities only, to be injurious to the constitution, and which causes so great an amount of misery in time, and above all, in eternity, to our fellow-creatures! Oh! what an incalculable decrease would there be in the aggregate of human misery in the earth, were all Christian traders willing to follow the example of this son of despised Ethiopia, and give themselves up to be actuated by a similar spirit of true christianity, remembering the binding injunction of the great Lawgiver, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you."



Being naturally possessed of a tender feeling mind, Paul Cuffe, long, and deeply mourned over the degraded, destitute, and miserable condition of his African brethren ; and it was in his active commiseration in their behalf, that he shone forth most conspicuously as a man of worth. Although he observed many benevolent men engaged in endeavouring to release them from bondage, and pouring into their minds the light of literature and religion, he saw at the same time the force of prejudice operating so powerfully against them, as to give but little encouragement to hope, that they could ever experience a rise to respectability and usefulness, unless it were in a state of society, where they would have greater incentives to improvement, and more favourable opportunities than would probably be ever afforded them, where the bulk of the population are whites.

Under these impressions, he turned his attention to the British settlement at Sierra Leone, being induced to believe from various communications he had received from Europe and other sources, that his endeavours to contribute to its welfare and to that of his fellow-men, might not be ineffectual. On examination he found his affairs were in so prosperous and flourishing a state, as to warrant the undertaking ; and being fully convinced that he was called upon to appropriate a portion of what he had freely received from the hands of an ever bountiful Providence, to

the benefit of his *unhappy* race, he embarked in the commencement of 1811, in his own brig "Traveller," manned entirely by persons of colour, his nephew, Thomas Wainer, being the captain. After a passage of about two months, they arrived at Sierra Leone, where Paul remained about the same length of time, during which interval he made himself acquainted with the real state and condition of the colony. He had frequent conversations with the Governor and principal inhabitants, during which opportunities, he suggested several important improvements. Amongst other things, he recommended the formation of a society for the purpose of promoting the interests of its members and the colonists in general; which measure was immediately acceded to and adopted, and the society named, "The Friendly Society of Sierra Leone," composed principally of respectable men of colour. The following epistle, bearing date, "Sierra Leone, April 20th, 1811," briefly representing the inconsistency of the conduct of Christians with their profession, in continuing to hold their fellow-men in slavery, emanated from this society, a copy of which was brought over to this country by Cuffe. The expressions it contains, bear the marks of native beauty and simplicity, and such a true Christian spirit breathes throughout, that I am sure the reader will excuse my here introducing it.

It is as follows:—

"THE EPISTLE  
 OF THE  
 FRIENDLY SOCIETY OF SIERRA LEONE,  
 IN AFRICA."

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ ;  
 grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father,  
 and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

We desire to humble ourselves with that thankful acknowledgment to the Father and Fountain of all our mercies, for the liberty and freedom we enjoy. And our prayer to God is, that our brethren who live in distant lands and are held in bondage, and groan under the galling chain of slavery, that they may be liberated and enjoy the liberty that God has granted unto all his faithful saints.

Dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, may the power and peace of God rule in all your hearts, for we feel, from an awful experience, the distresses that many of our African brethren groan under ; therefore we feel our minds engaged to desire all the saints and professors in Christ, to diligently consider our cause, and to put our cause to the Christian query : whether it is agreeable to the testimony of Jesus Christ, for one professor to make merchandize of another ? We are desirous that this may be made manifest to the professors of all Christian denominations, who have not abolished the holding of slaves. We salute you,



beloved brethren, in the Lord, with sincere desires that the work of regeneration may be more and more experienced. It would be a consolation to us, to hear from the saints in distant lands, that we could receive all who are disposed to come unto us with open arms.

Our dearly beloved African brethren, we also salute you in the love of God, to be obedient unto your masters, with your prayers lifted up to God, whom we would recommend you to confide in, who is just as able in these days to deliver you from the yoke of oppression, as he hath in time past brought your forefathers out of the Egyptian bondage. Finally, brethren, may the power and peace of God rule in all your hearts.

Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen.”\*

Now reader, let me query—who are Christians; these men or their tyrannical oppressors? No answer to this question is required, the thing speaks too plainly for itself.

From Sierra Leone, Paul Cuffe sailed to England; for the African Institution, apprised of his benevolent designs, applied for and obtained a license, which being forwarded to him, induced him to come over with a cargo of African produce. For the more

\* Then follow the signatures of sixteen respectable men of colour.

effectual promotion of his primary object, he left his nephew, Thomas Wainer, in the colony, and with the same disinterested views, brought with him to England, Aaron Richards, a native of Sierra Leone, with an intention of educating him, and particularly of instructing him in the art of navigation.

From the exertions of one individual, however ardently engaged, we ought not to form too high expectations; but from the little information that can be obtained of his endeavours among the colonists at Sierra Leone, and the open reception he met with amongst them, there are strong grounds for hoping that the seeds of improvement he scattered, were not sown upon an unfruitful soil.

Cuffe, with his brig "Traveller," navigated by eight men of colour and an apprentice boy, arrived at Liverpool, on the 1st of 8th mo. 1811; and it is but justice to the crew to observe, that "during their stay they were remarkable for their good conduct, and proper behaviour; and that the greatest cordiality appeared to prevail amongst them."\*

Cuffe remained in England about two months, where he met with every mark of attention and respect. He visited London twice during this interval, the second time at the request of the Board of the African Institution, who were desirous of consulting with him as to the best means of carrying

\* "Liverpool Mercury."

their benevolent views respecting Africa into effect ; and having an opportunity of laying his intentions, and opening his prospects before these philanthropic individuals, they cordially acquiesced with him in all his plans, and gave him authority to carry over from the United States a few coloured persons of good character, to instruct the colonists in agriculture and the mechanical arts.

Paul Cuffe sailed from England on the 20th of 9th mo., to the honour of the British government, with a license from them to prosecute his voyage to Sierra Leone, carrying with him some goods as a consignment to the " Friendly Society," to encourage them in the way of trade.

Is it possible to conceive a more animating spectacle for the eye of humanity, than to see a vessel commanded by a free and enlightened African, trading to the port of Liverpool, not many years previous the nidus of the slave-trade ! and to behold him prosecuting his voyages, with a vessel not laden with instruments of destruction, cruelty, and oppression, but manned with sable, yet free and respectable seamen, who had been happily rescued from the galling chain of slavery, and employed in honourable commerce ?

Having, again, safely arrived at Sierra Leone, delivered the goods and given some salutary instructions, he once more set sail and returned to his native land.



Thus terminated the two first missions of Paul Cuffe to Africa ; missions productive of the most happy consequences ; undertaken from the purest motives of benevolence ; and solely at his own expense and risk. Thus unwearied he went about doing good, following the example of his Lord and Master, devoting nearly the whole of his time and talents to benevolent purposes.—Christian reader, I again appeal to thee ; canst thou believe that such an one could be possessed of a soul in any degree inferior to thine own ?

On Paul Cuffe's arrival at home again, after an absence of several months, he was joyfully welcomed by his family and friends, and every comfort this world can afford waited his command. But the sufferings of his fellow-creatures, groaning under the yoke of bondage, cruel slavery, and unjust oppression, groping in the dark and horrible night of heathenish superstition and ignorance, were indelibly stamped on his mind, and it was in vain to endeavour to erase them. Under the influence of feelings like these he could not rest at ease ; he could not think of enjoying repose and comfort, whilst he reflected that he might in any degree be the instrument in the hand of Divine Providence of ameliorating the sufferings, or administering relief to the innumerable multitude of his brethren in their destitute and pitiable condition. Possessed of much native

energy of mind ; far from being discouraged by the labours and dangers he had already undergone ; and unmindful of the ease which the decline of life requires, and to which his long continued and earnest exertions gave him a peculiar claim, he contemplated a renewal of his benevolent and philanthropic labours. So that scarcely had the first transports of rejoicing at his return to the bosom of his family and friends time to subside, before he commenced preparations for another voyage to Sierra Leone. In the hope of finding persons of the description given by the African Institution, qualified to instruct the colonists in agriculture and the mechanical arts, he visited most of the large cities in the United States ; held frequent conferences with the most respectable men of colour, and also those among the whites who had distinguished themselves as the friends of the Africans ; recommending the coloured people to form associations for the furtherance of the benevolent work in which he was engaged. Two societies were formed ; one in Philadelphia, and the other in New York, and a number of eligible coloured persons were soon found, who were willing to go with him and settle in Africa. But, unfortunately, before he found himself in readiness for the voyage, the war commenced between America and Great Britain. This most unfavourable, and truly calamitous circumstance, formed an

almost insurmountable barrier to his operations, which he was so anxious to remove, that he travelled from his home at Westport to the city of Washington, a distance of about 500 miles, to solicit the government in favour of his intended undertaking; and to allow him to depart and carry with him those persons and their effects, who had volunteered to go and settle at Sierra Leone, and whom he had engaged to accompany him for that purpose. Although his general plan was highly and universally approved, his application proved unsuccessful, the policy of the government not admitting of such an intercourse with an enemy's colony. The following extract from a letter written by Paul Cuffe to a Friend in Liverpool about this time, in which he alludes in much simplicity to his application to government, will be found interesting.

When it is remembered that the writer was almost entirely self-taught, never having, as has before been observed, had the advantage of a day's schooling in his life, I have no difficulty in placing full confidence in the liberality of the reader in overlooking any slight inaccuracies which occur in the mode of expression.

*Westport, 7th mo. 12th, 1812.*

Much esteemed Friend, T.... T...

Notwithstanding our far distance apart, and the separation of the two countries by declaration of



war, all this, and all the inventions of man or men, I hope will not be able to separate us from the love of God. Thou cannot conceive the breathing desires I feel for all those that are influenced with that love for the Church of Christ, that cannot be separated by the invention of man lightly to esteem their brethren.

My wife particularly desires to remember her love to thee and thy wife, and to thy aunt, for your very kind attention to her husband, (as well as the shawl and handkerchief) hoping your reward will be life everlasting, where peace and harmony will never cease. When I arrived at home, I found my ——— and hope these may find thee and thine enjoying the same blessing. I found the non-importation and embargo laws in full force, left my vessel at sea and went on shore to consult the officer what steps could be safely taken ; but before I reached the “Traveller,” the revenue cutter came, although the “Traveller” took her and carried her in, and reported her for condemnation for having come from a British colony, bringing a cargo of African produce from Sierra Leone, and having some English goods on board. I went to Congress, (about 500 miles) and laid the nature of my voyage before them. They considered it to be praiseworthy and laudable ; therefore they gave all my cargo and vessel back to me without taking any cost on the government’s part, yet I was at very considerable cost.

At present things wear a very gloomy look and all business very dull. My intention was to send the "Traveller" to Sierra Leone this coming fall with several families, but at present it must be omitted. I have written to William Allen in hopes of obtaining a license from the British government.

When I was at the seat of our government, they told me they would assist me in every shape they could, consistently with the laws of the United States. I think they will grant liberty for the Traveller to go to Africa.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

I am,  
Thy very affectionate friend,  
PAUL CUFFE."

So that his application to government proving unsuccessful, he had now no other alternative than to remain quietly at home, and wait the event of the war.

The delay thus unexpectedly occasioned by the war, instead of being suffered to damp his ardour, was employed by him in improving and maturing his plans, as also in extending his correspondence, which already embraced some of the most distinguished philanthropic characters in Great Britain and America. After the termination of the war, with all convenient speed he prepared for his departure,

and in 12th mo., 1815, he took on board his brig thirty-eight persons of the dispersed and oppressed race of Africa, who were to instruct the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, in farming and the mechanical arts ; and after a voyage of fifty-five days, landed them safely on the soil of their progenitors.

It may here be observed, that in his zeal for the welfare of his brethren, Paul Cuffe had considerably exceeded the instructions of the Institution at London, by which he had been advised not to carry over in the first instance more than six or eight persons ; consequently he had no claim on them for the passage and other expenses attending the removal of any above that number. But this he had previously considered, and generously resolved to bear the burden of the expense of thirty himself, rather than that any of those whom he had engaged, should be deprived of an opportunity of going where they might be so beneficially employed. He, moreover, perceived, that when these persons were landed at Sierra Leone, it would be necessary to make such provision for the destitute as would support them until they were enabled to provide for themselves. For this also, he had to apply to his own resources ; so that on the present voyage, he expended out of his own private funds between three and four thousand dollars, for the benefit of the colony. This generosity deserves to be placed on record, and handed down to posterity as



a proof of the warmth of his benevolence, and of the purity and disinterestedness of his attachment to the African race.

On the arrival of Paul Cuffe at Sierra Leone, he presented his passengers to the Governor, who gave to each family a small piece of ground in the town, besides from thirty to fifty acres of land, according to their number, in a situation about two miles distant. In a letter he wrote to England, subsequently to this period, in reply to one he had received, requiring him to say what should be done for the advantage of the new settlers, Paul Cuffe prudently advised that a house should be built for the accommodation of their families on each of the farms.

He also drew up an address to his brethren at the colony, containing much affectionate advice and pious exhortation. It is too long to insert here, this Memoir having already considerably exceeded the bounds at first prescribed; but a pretty correct idea of the general tenor of it may be formed, from the following brief extracts:—

“Beloved friends and fellow-countrymen, I earnestly recommend to you the propriety of assembling yourselves together to worship the Lord your God. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him acceptably, must worship in spirit and in truth.

“Come, my African brethren, let us walk in the light of the Lord; in that pure light which bringeth

salvation into the world. I recommend sobriety and steadfastness; that so professors may be good examples in all things. I recommend that early care be taken to instruct the youth, while their minds are tender; that so they may be preserved from the corruptions of the world, from profanity, intemperance, and bad company.

“May servants be encouraged to discharge their duty with faithfulness; may they be brought up to industry, and may their minds be cultivated for the reception of the good seed, which is promised to all who seek it. I want that we should be faithful in all things, that so we may become a people giving satisfaction to those who have borne the burden and heat of the day, in liberating us from a state of slavery.”

These appear to be the simple expressions of his feelings, and the language of his heart.

His stay at the colony, at this time, was about two months, and when he took his departure, particularly from those whom he had brought over with him; it was like a father taking leave of his children, receiving the tokens of their overflowing affection, and with pious admonition, commending them to the protection of Almighty God. “I leave you,” says he in the concluding part of his address,—“I leave you in the hands of Him who is able to preserve you through time, and crown you with that blessing which is prepared for all who are faithful to the end.”

The exclusion of American vessels from trading to the British colonies, by the late treaty, had rendered him, in order that he might prosecute his designs, very solicitous to obtain a license for his vessel to trade to Sierra Leone. He had, indeed, been urged to connect himself with the Institution at London, and to sail as supercargo in British bottoms, and to British ports; but with this he was unwilling to comply, though he knew the business would be very lucrative. Considering himself, to use his own phraseology, as a member of the whole African family, he was unwilling to leave that part of it which was in America, in its present state: "My wish," said he, "is for the good of this people universally." His last voyage had been undertaken at the risk of having his vessel and cargo seized and condemned; and though he escaped, he could not think it advisable to run the same hazard again. He therefore wrote to his friends in England, requesting them to endeavour to obtain a license for his vessel, and to make some other arrangements which he deemed necessary, before undertaking another voyage. Whether these arrangements were ever made is doubtful; but if they were, it was not until after he was seized with a complaint which proved fatal, and terminated his labours and his life, which he departed in peace the 7th of the 9th mo., 1817, being then in the fifty-ninth year of his age.



During his last illness, which lasted about half-a-year, the subject of ameliorating the condition of his brethren continued deeply impressed on his mind, and his decaying powers were occupied in an extensive correspondence with their friends : and although now he was unable to serve them as he had done, he was gratified in finding his views adopted by a number of the most benevolent and influential men in the American Union.

Such was the public character of Paul Cuffe ; such the warmth of his benevolence, the activity of his zeal, and the extent of his labours, in behalf of the African race. Indeed his whole life may be said to have been spent in their service. To their interests he devoted the acquisitions of his youth, the time of his later years, and even the thoughts of his dying pillow !

“ As a private man, he was just and upright in all his dealings, an affectionate husband, a kind father, a good neighbour, and a faithful friend. Pious without ostentation, and warmly attached to the principles of Quakerism, he manifested in all his deportment, that he was a true disciple of Jesus ; and cherished a charitable disposition to professors of every denomination, who walked according to the leading principles of the gospel. Regardless of the honours and pleasures of the world, in humble imitation of his Divine master, he went from place to place doing

good ; looking not for his reward among men, but in the favour of his heavenly Father. Thus walking in the ways of piety and usefulness, in the smiles of an approving conscience, and the favour of God ; he enjoyed through life, an unusual serenity and satisfaction of mind, and when the fatal messenger arrived to cut the bonds of mortality, it found him in peace, ready and willing to depart. In that solemnly interesting period, when nature with him was struggling in the pangs of dissolution, such a calmness and serenity overspread his soul, and manifested itself in his countenance and actions, that the heart of the greatest reprobate, at beholding him, would respond to the wish, " Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

A short time previous to his final close, feeling sensible that it was near, he called his family together to bid them adieu ! It was an affecting scene. A scene of inexpressible solemnity—of tears and bitter anguish on the one hand, and christian firmness and resignation on the other. His wife and children, and several other relatives being assembled around him, the good old man reached forth his enfeebled hand, and after shaking hands with each and giving them some pious advice, he commended them to the tender mercies of Jehovah, and bade them all a final farewell." \*

\* " Discourse on the death of Paul Cuffe," by Peter

Having thus taken leave of his family and commended them individually to the care of God, his mind seemed almost entirely occupied in anticipating the glory of which he would shortly be made a partaker, and in contemplating the blessedness of being for ever with Christ Jesus his Redeemer and Sanctifier. To one of his neighbours who came to visit him, he said, "Not many days hence and ye shall see the glory of God; I know that my works are all gone to judgment before me;" and soon after he added, "It is all well, it is all well."

Thus did this true and faithful follower of Jesus Christ experience a happy transition from works to rewards, and from a state of trial and probation to a glorious never-ending eternity! Whatever the caste of his complexion might be, his faith was steadfastly fixed upon Him who hath "made of one blood all the nations of men," in the merits of whose sufferings and death he most surely believed, and in whom he had a well-grounded hope of eternal life, peace, and joy unspeakable, full of glory! even in Him who is appointed to be the Redeemer and Saviour of the whole human family, whether they be male or female, bond or free, black or white; all are alike made partakers of the glorious inheritance purchased by the one

Williams, junr., a man of colour, from which many interesting particulars contained in this pamphlet have been extracted.



great offering of the blessed Son of God, without the gates of Jerusalem, for the sins of the whole world. Seeing we are all made of one blood ; children of one common parent, so have we each an equal interest in this one great and notable sacrifice, which was not a partial one ; not confined to those of any particular kindred, nation, or tongue, but universal and complete, embracing in its efficacy the whole world, without excluding a single son or daughter of Adam ; so that “ in every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.”

Before I draw this interesting Memoir to a close, as an additional testimony to the character of Paul Cuffe, I shall here insert an extract from the obituary of an American newspaper.

“ Died, at Westport, on the 7th of Sept., Paul Cuffe, a very respectable man of colour, in the 59th year of his age. A descendant of Africa, he overcame by native strength of mind, and firm adherence to principle, the prejudices with which her descendants are too generally viewed. Industrious, temperate, and prudent, his means of acquiring property, small at first, were gradually increased ; and the strict integrity of his conduct gained him numerous friends, to whom he never gave occasion to regret the confidence they had placed in him. His mercantile pursuits were generally successful ; and blessed with competence, if not with wealth, the enlarged

benevolence of his mind was manifested, not only in acts of charity to individuals, and in the promotion of objects of general utility, but more particularly in the deep interest he felt for the welfare of his brethren of the African race.

He was concerned not only to set them a good example by his own correct conduct, to admonish and counsel them against the vices and habits to which he found them most prone—but more extensively to promote their welfare, and at considerable sacrifice of property, he three times visited the colony of Sierra Leone; and after his first voyage thither, went to England, where he was much noticed by the members of the African institution, who conferred with him on the best manner of extending the means of civilization to the people of Africa, and some of whom have since expressed their satisfaction in his pious labours in the colony; believing them to have been productive of much usefulness to that settlement.

Grave, humble, and unassuming in his deportment, he was remarkable for great civility and sound discretion. Through several months severe affliction, he was preserved in much Christian patience, fortitude, and resignation; feeling entire confidence in that grace which had been vouchsafed to him in life, and by which, through faith and obedience, he felt a comfortable hope of admittance into peace and rest.

He has left a widow and several children to lament the loss of an affectionate husband and parent.

Many of his neighbours and friends evinced their respect for his memory by attending his funeral, which was conducted agreeably to the usages of the Society of Friends, of which he was a member ; and at which several lively testimonies were borne to the truth, that the Almighty parent has " made of one blood all the nations of men," and that, " in every nation, he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

Now, Christian reader, in conclusion, I would address a few words to thee, as briefly as I can. Thou hast perused the unadorned narrative of this interesting descendant of Africa :—thou hast followed him in his gradual rise, through a host of difficulties and prejudices to which the unfortunate descendants of Ethiopia are too often subjected, from a state of poverty, ignorance, and obscurity, to a state of wealth, influence, respectability, and honour. Having thus elevated himself with an unsullied conscience, by the native energy of his mind,—thou hast seen how he conducted himself with meekness and moderation towards all men ;—thou hast seen him devoting his time and his talents to pious and benevolent purposes :—thou hast beheld him traversing the globe, at the risk of his own life and property, in endeavouring to promote the happiness of



his fellow-creatures :—thou hast seen that his motives were pure and disinterested, inasmuch as thou hast seen him dispensing his thousands of dollars together, when occasion required :—thou hast seen that he was a man, a brother, a friend, and a Christian, maintaining a higher standard than many great professors :—thou hast seen him refuse to deal in anything, however lawful or lucrative, that could directly or indirectly injure his fellow-men :—thou hast seen that he was a good neighbour, an affectionate husband, and a kind parent :—thou hast beheld him crossing the mighty deep, visiting the land of his forefathers, carrying with him the light of science and religion, and diffusing it through those vast benighted regions :—thou hast heard of his reputation for wisdom and integrity :—thou hast seen that the untutored tribes inhabiting the trackless regions of Ethiopia, learnt to consider him as a father and a friend :—yes, and thou hast also seen that some of the most respectable men of Great Britain and America were not ashamed to seek for counsel and advice from this son of a poor African slave ! What more canst thou look for or desire ? Thou hast heard him commend his wife and his children to the Almighty Sovereign and Lord of all :—and finally, thou hast seen him lay down his own head in peace, die the death of the righteous, in full assurance of a glorious immortality, through the merits and intercession of a

crucified Redeemer. Surely, thy prejudice will not denounce such a man as possessed of an inferior soul because of his complexion :

“ Fleecy locks and black complexion,  
Cannot forfeit nature’s claim :  
Skins may differ, but affection  
Dwells in white and black the same.”

Well, indeed, may the unjustly oppressed African query, “ Am I not a man and a brother ?” and indignantly adopt the language of our far-famed poet and exclaim :—

“ Deem our nation brutes no longer,  
’Till some reason ye shall find  
Worthier of regard, and stronger  
Than the colour of our kind.”

COWPER.

Oh, how I tremble for those who do in any way countenance the iniquitous sin of slavery, in word or in deed. Ah! how many will there be in the great day of retribution, which is fast hastening upon us, to whom the awful sentence will go forth, “ depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and

in prison, and ye visited me not." Vain will be all pleading now, or saying, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" for he shall answer them, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me."

It is an appalling fact, and scarcely a day passes away without furnishing increasing evidence to prove beyond all doubt, that now in the nineteenth century with all the efforts of pious and philanthropic individuals, amid the wide diffusion of knowledge, and numerous and ever increasing plans of benevolence, and the strong professions of liberality which mark the present age, this crying sin in the sight of heaven, the iniquitous traffic in human flesh is carried on to a greater and more unlimited extent than has ever before been known, and under circumstances of unprecedented enormity and aggravated cruelty.\* But through the determined and persever-

\* "There are now above five millions of human beings held in slavery by Christian powers! Yes! 'free and independent America,' retains in cruel bondage and gloomy ignorance, 2,250,000 negroes. In the Brazils, there are 2,000,000; in the Spanish possessions, 500,000; under the French 300,000; and under the Portuguese, Dutch, and Danish 10,000; making a total of 5,150,000!"

ESTHER COPLEY'S "HISTORY OF SLAVERY."



ing exertions of benevolent individuals, with the blessing of God crowning their efforts, the day will yet arrive and may not be far distant, when the neck of the demon monster slavery shall be effectually broken, and be no longer known or permitted to exist throughout the whole habitable globe. Come forward, Christian reader, then, and lend all thy influence in hastening the arrival of such a day; come forward in aid of the righteous object so ardently desired by every friend of justice and humanity, the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade. Let the heart-rending cries of the negro penetrate thy soul;—think of severed ties and broken hearts;—of husbands and wives torn from each other's arms, of mothers robbed of their infants, writhing under the lash, subjected to the torturing and blood-extorting whip, and condemned to walk upon tread-mills of agonizing construction for offences the most trivial. Canst thou sit down in the enjoyment of all the comfort, the peace, and the freedom which kind Providence has bestowed upon thee, and not hear the sighs and unutterable groans of anguish and deep distress of the unhappy negro-slave, wafted across the wide Atlantic.

“Hark ! from the West a voice of woe.”

Thy brother's blood crieth unto thee from the ground ;  
he earnestly craves thy help and protection, and an

alleviation of the unjust sufferings to which he is subjected.

“Unshelter’d from the burning rays,  
The panting negro lies.  
Jail and the scourge cut short his days :  
He faints—he dies.

No Wife’s, no Mother’s hand is there  
To close his failing eyes ;  
Unsooth’d by friendship’s tender care,  
The negro dies.

He dies—not by the single hand  
That gave the mortal blow,  
His blood is on our guilty land,  
We bade it flow.

Britain, arise ! and purge the stain ;  
A freeman’s rights bestow,  
Else God will burst the negro’s chain,  
And lay thee low,”\*

Oh ! christian reader, that the untold tale of woe and wretchedness of thy fellow-creatures, doomed to perpetual bondage and hard servitude, whose bleeding wounds alone are the tongue by which they can reveal their misery, may excite thy sympathy and commiseration, and arouse thee to active exertions in their behalf. It is in the cause of suffering humanity I earnestly implore thy influence however small it may be.

“Remember,” I beseech thee, “them that are in

\* M. B. Tuckey’s “Wrongs of Africa.”

bonds as bound with them ;" see if it is not in thy power to do something towards rescuing so many unhappy beings from the miserable thralldom to which they have long been subjected ; and rest not satisfied until the doors of the prison-house of bondage are broken down, liberty to the captive is effected, and " the oppressed go free !" until " the princes shall come forth from Egypt, and Ethiopia stretch out her hand unto God !"

May the fervent prayers of all those who are interested in the welfare of their fellow-men, and sympathise with the suffering African, ascend to the throne of heaven. " Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee ; according to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die." Psalm lxxix. 11. It is the All-wise and All-merciful Disposer of events, the Lord Omnipotent alone, that can bless our efforts, and He will assuredly crown them with success, if we place our full confidence in Him, and faint not. To His name be ascribed all the praise and all the glory !

" Jesus ! from thy dwelling-place,  
Look on Afric's captive race ;  
While their bitter groans ascend,  
Let thy willing ear attend ;  
Thou, who never did'st deny  
Pity to the mourner's cry,  
Hear the prayer we send to Thee,  
Set the injured Negro free.

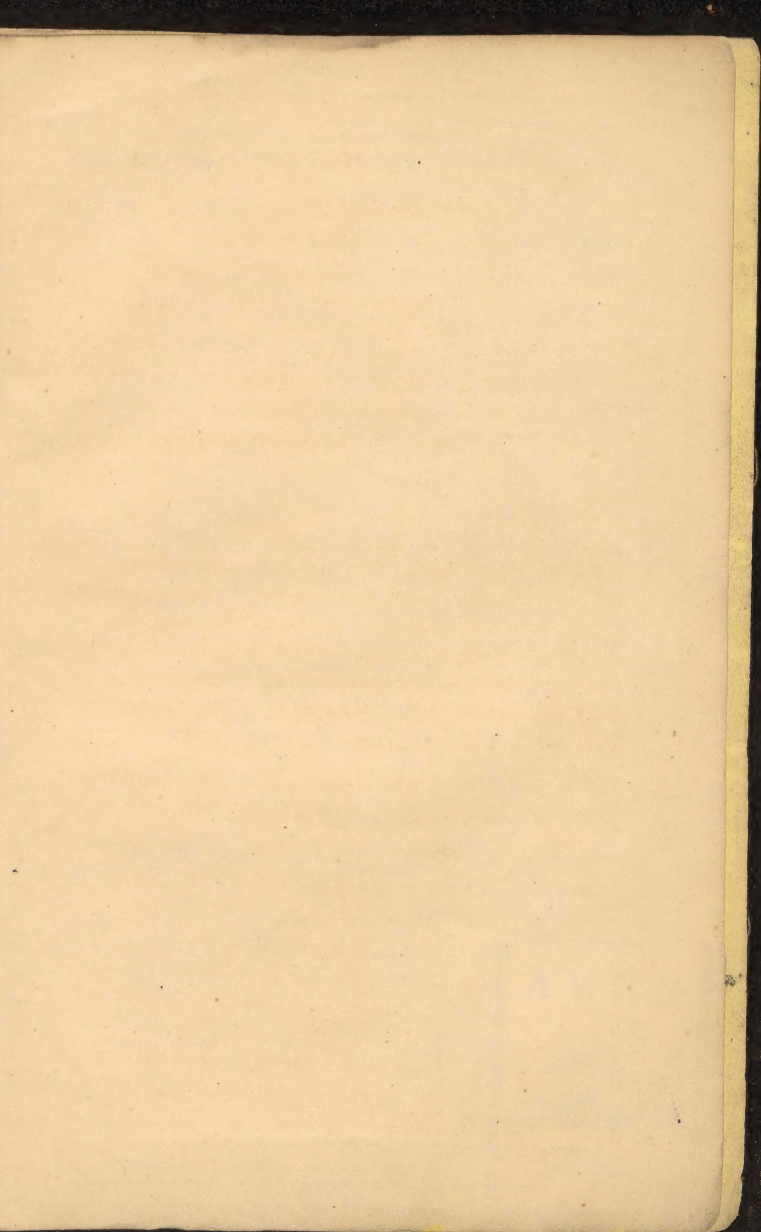
Man, a broken reed at best,  
 Wounds the hands that on him rest ;  
 Human power—'tis empty fame ;  
 He who trusts it, trusts a name :  
 Thou, who didst for sin atone,  
 All unaided and alone,  
 Lo ! in faith we turn to Thee  
 Set the injured Negro free."

"WRONGS OF AFRICA."

NOTE.—As another edition of this Memoir may be published at a future time, if any friends are in possession of other information respecting Paul Cuffe, not contained in the foregoing pages, the compiler will be much obliged by their forwarding any particulars to his address, either at No. 12, Liverpool Street, Bishopsgate Street, London ; or at Water Lodge, near Leeds.

THE END.





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